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Why do individuals seek out adventure sport coaching?

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Individualisation is a key aspect of coaching practice. This is particularly important for adventure sport coaches, given the demands of the hyper-dynamic coaching environment and the various motivations to participate in adventure sports. However, the literature on individualisation is limited. As a logical beginning, the aim of this study is to understand why individuals seek coaching in the context of adventure sports. Semi-structured interviews with adventure sport clients (N = 15) were thematically analysed, revealing that clients seek three different but not mutually exclusive experiences: holistic, authentic, and developmental. Importantly, the extent to which each experience was desired varied between individuals. These differences in individual desires place a fundamental emphasis on coaches' understanding of why an individual seeks coaching as well as their longer-term participation goals, and then having the adaptive expertise to meet those expectations. Further research is required to understand how aspects of the developmental experience are achieved, specifically in the desired contexts.

Keywords: adaptive expertise; adventure sports; adventure sport coaching; individualisation

Introduction

The capacity to individualise lies at the heart of effective coaching (Garman, Whiston & Zlatoper, 2000; Ives, 2008; Kim, Penney, Cho, & Choi, 2006; Siedentop, Hastie, & Van der Mars, 2011). Indeed, Ives (2008) identified individualisation, a process whereby a coach alters their practice in response to an individual, as one of nine aspects common to all coaching. Increasingly, authors have identified epistemological beliefs and coaching practices among high-level adventure sport coaches, which place individuals at the centre of the coaching process (Brymer, 2010; Christian, Berry & Kearney, 2017; D. Collins, Collins & Carson, 2016; L. Collins & Collins, 2015, 2016b; L. Collins, Collins & Grecic, 2015; Gray & Collins, 2016). There remains little empirical evidence, however, on individualisation as an aspect of coaching behaviour in adventure sports. It is thus reasonable to examine why participants seek adventure sport coaching, and what those individuals want from their coaching. Such an investigation would expand knowledge on adventure sport coaching practice. Adventure sports form a significant subset of sport and recreation, one that is experiencing worldwide growth as participants increasingly seek interaction with the wilderness in addition to the thrill of the activity (Perdomo, 2014) and the strong social bonds that can be formed. The context of this study is that adventure sport coaching has features in common with Jones' (2006) description of coaching as an educative process at all levels rather than only for elite performance development (see De Bosscher & Van Bottenburg, (2011)). As such, there is growing academic interest in adventure sport coaching practice, as well-trained, professional coaches rise to meet this demand. Therefore, in this paper we first consider individualisation as an aspect of effective coaching strategy before exploring its implications in an adventure sports context, and possible motivations to seek coaching. Finally, we ask: why do adventure sport participants seek coaching, and what do those clients want from their adventure sport coaching?

Individualisation in coaching

According to Gearity (2012), a lack of individualisation is an aspect of poor coaching. Coaches have stressed the significance of individualisation (Greenwood, Davids, & Renshaw, 2012) identifying physical, physiological, cognitive, and emotional characteristics that can be individualised. In particular, Greenwood et al. identified that an individualised approach allowed the emergence of a 'unique performance solution' (p. 419) that might suit diverse populations or activities without clear technical templates or models of performance. However, the literature on individualisation is sparse. Some evidence was presented by Sousa, Smith, and Cruz (2008), who reported that individualised goal-setting positively impacted athlete performance. Individualised feedback was described by Gould, Collins, Lauer, and Chung (2007) as an aspect of effective coaching strategy in experienced American football coaches. In terms of communication, Newell (1991) elaborated on the frequency, structure, nature, and quantity of feedback as aspects to individualise. In relation to goal-setting, Weinberg (1994) reported task characteristics, type of setting, difficulty, and degree of commitment as features that appeared individualistic, offering some guidance to coaches.

In addition, the learning process can be individualised. For example, Mosston and Ashworth's (2002) spectrum of teaching styles can be individualised based on pedagogic needs, where the spectrum ranges from coach-centred instructional styles to student-centred approaches with differing degrees of ownership of the learning by the learner. However, these styles are not without criticism or misuse. Sicilia-Camacho and Brown (2008) reported misapplication of Mosston and Ashworth's spectrum when focused on an individual teaching style, rather than aiming to 'exhibit mobility ability' (p. 92) with the teacher and student travelling along the spectrum of possible approaches as appropriate. The notion of learning styles (Pashler, McDaniel, Rohrer, & Bjork, 2008) found in many National Governing Body (NGB) coach education manuals (see British Association of Snowsport Instructors, 2013;

British Canoe Union, 2007; Mountain Training, 2013) can also be individualised. However, Franklin (2006) discussed the dangers of labelling a pupil as purely visual, audio or kinaesthetic, as this would neglect the nuances of teaching in a variety of contexts, subjects, or environments, and the broader demands of 'learnacy' (Claxton, 2002). Pashler et al. (2008) found no adequate evidence to justify incorporating learning styles assessments into general educational practice, contrary to the NGB coach education schemes. Individualisation is incorporated in the coaching process through differentiation of teaching delivery, an aspect identified by Collins and Collins (2015a, 2016b) in adventure sport coaching. Elements of style and content of delivery are tailored for the individual learner. However, we concur with Gould et al. (2012), who highlighted that more needed to be known about how and what coaches individualise.

Individualisation in adventure sport coaching

Individualisation is prized in high-level adventure sport coaching (Berry, Lomax, & Hodgson, 2015). Christian et al. (2017) identified individualisation as a core belief of adventure sport coaching practice. Furthermore, Collins et al. (2015) and Collins and Collins (2015b) reported individualisation of the pedagogic needs of the individuals being coached in adventure sports. Individualisation also appears highly pertinent because of the impact of the hyper-dynamic, constantly changing environment (L. Collins & Collins, 2016a). In addition, the personalised nature of adventure (Humberstone, 2009; Kerr & Houge Mackenzie, 2012; Lynch & Dibben, 2016; Houge Mackenzie & Brymer, 2018) adds an extra dimension that could be individualised. Coaches must pitch each activity to align with individuals' personal construct for 'adventure'. Given the importance placed on individualisation as well as the highly personalised nature of adventure, it is appropriate that adventure sport coaches must consider what clients want from the coaching experience.

Possible motivations to seek out adventure sport coaching

Some views of sport coaching have suggested that coaching attempts to improve performance by refining existing and well-established skills (Bale & Sang, 1996; Carson & Collins, 2011; Ericsson, Krampe, & Tesch-Römer, 1993). In traditional sporting contexts, performance can be measured as victory over an opponent or faster times (Cassidy, Jones, & Potrac, 2009; Gould et al., 2007; Ong, Elliott, Ackland, & Lyttle, 2006). Miller and Kerr (2002) recognised the need to acknowledge motivations for participation beyond the pursuit of medals and victory. According to Vallerand (2004), 'motivation represents one of the most important variables in sport' (p. 427). In an adventure sports context, Brymer and Gray (2009) highlighted that participation was about harmony between participant and environment. However, this was only one perspective, from veteran participants. Kerr and Houge Mackenzie (2012) characterised participation in adventure sports more broadly, as complex and multifaceted. They suggested that an individualised approach to understanding participation might be required, echoing Collins and Brymer's (2018) notion of having a personalised conception of nature sports (akin to adventure sports). Coaching that does not reflect the culture of a particular sport may also be rejected (see Ojala & Thorpe's study of elite snowboarders, 2015). It seems likely that this is a rejection of poor coaching rather than of all coaching (D. Collins, Collins & Willmott, 2016). In short, the rejection of coaching represents a failure to individualise the process.

Bailey et al. (2010) offered potential reasons for participation, including elite referenced excellence (i.e. I am the best in X); personally referenced excellence (i.e. I am getting better than I was at Y); or participation for personal well-being (i.e. I do Z because I enjoy it and it makes me feel good). The elite referenced excellence category includes those who are motivated to be the first person among their peers to achieve a given accomplishment (first ascents and first descents may be specific to adventure sports – for

example, a new river or climbing route). Those adventurers who seek out a coach to help them 'push their grade' or perform in more adventurous settings can be categorised in the personally referenced excellence grouping. Finally, personal well-being, to maintain or improve elements of physical fitness and the 'stay in shape' factor, is shared by many sports. However, increased use of the outdoors for this purpose should be recognised. In addition, the 'cathartic process' of adventure and challenge is recognised by many cultures and provides a possible motivation that falls into the final category. In particular, accommodating the shifts between these three broad categories throughout an athlete's lifetime would suggest that experience and age may also affect individualisation. Brymer and Gray (2009) recognised these changes in adventure sports, and suggested that they were aspects that could be individualised.

Other perspectives on motivation to seek coaching have offered a more holistic view of coaching. Super, Verkooijen, and Koelen (2018) reported that community sport coaches were teaching 'life skills' to vulnerable young people. Such coaching was focusing on co-operation, sportsmanship, and health rather than on level of performance. This approach may resonate with adventure sport coaching because of its outdoor education antecedents (L. Collins & Collins, 2016a), in which the activity is a means to teach wider education themes once basic movement skills to access the outdoors are established (Priest & Gass, 2005). The transfer of wider education themes or life skills through any sport coaching should not be considered automatic, since 'training coaches to transfer these skills from the sport setting is a necessary next step in coach training research' (Vella, Oades, & Crowe, 2011, p. 45). The debate about whether these themes, such as confidence and character, are best taught implicitly or explicitly (Turnnidge, Côté, & Hancock, 2014) may hinge on the context of the coaching. In this context, perhaps a difference between the outdoor educator and the adventure sport coach is the degree of explicitness. The outdoor educator's goal may be the

explicit development of these themes to aid wider education, but an implicit approach is necessary for the adventure sport coach, who must address such themes to achieve the client's desired level of performance or participation. If this is true, the role of the adventure sport coach combines the complexity of outdoor education with that of skill development. This echoes Valkonen, Huilaja, and Koikkalainen (2013), who proposed that a well-trained outdoor professional was required to facilitate experiences in adventurous activities. Logically, the ability to tailor the experience to the individual would be central to their practice and a focus of training. Situational awareness and comprehension of the associated situational demands inform coaches' actions and enable them to meet individuals' needs. It is therefore fundamental to adventure sport coaching practice that coaches know why adventure sport participants seek coaching and what these participants want from their coaching experience. This inquiry is investigated in the current paper.

Methodology

An inductive, qualitative approach was used to investigate why clients seek coaching and what they want from those experiences. To promote breadth and richness of responses, semi-structured interviews were conducted with a sample of adventure sport participants who had sought coaching at a large, established commercial provider of adventure sport coaching.

Participants and procedure

Stratified-random sampling (Robson, 2011) was employed to gain a representative sample (N = 15). Participants were selected using the following inclusion criteria: (1) an adventure sport participant, (2) undertaking a five-day adventure sport coaching programme, for either mountain- or water-based adventure sports (3) an openness and willingness to engage in the research. Stratification was employed to reflect gender (female, n = 6, male, n = 9) as well as characterisation of adventure sports (mountain based (n = 11) or water based (n

= 4)) (see Table 1). This stratification was typical of the adventure sport coaching provider in question. Pseudonyms have been used for the purposes of this study, to maintain anonymity.

Insert Table 1 close to this point

Interviews were conducted over the autumn, winter and spring of 2017/18, to ensure a range of activities and participants. Participants were initially invited to participate at the start of their course and were provided with an information sheet and consent form midway through the course if they expressed an interest in participating. The interviews were then conducted either face-to-face in a comfortable and convenient location agreed to by the participants (Whiting, 2008), or via Skype (Deakin & Wakefield, 2014), 48 hours after the course had ended. Interviews were guided by the questioning and prompts outlined in Table 2, to focus on the motivations and expectations of the participant when seeking coaching. All interviews were digitally recorded in mp3 format. The study was conducted in accordance with the approval of the University of Central Lancashire's BHASS Ethics Committee.

Insert Table 2 close to this point

Data processing and analysis

Interviews were transcribed verbatim and reviewed for accuracy against the digital recording (Braun & Clarke, 2006; Fereday & Muir-Cochrane, 2006). A hybrid thematic analysis, both inductive and deductive, was used to interpret the data (Fereday & Muir-Cochrane, 2006), allowing it to be compared with existing concepts whilst remaining open to recognising new themes and interpreting themes anew (Braun & Clarke, 2012). The transcripts were codified whilst listening to the original recordings (Smith, Larkin, & Flowers, 2009, p. 82). Lower-, mid-, and higher-order themes were identified using NVivo 11. The significance of themes was not only indicated by frequency but also by significance

and emphasis during the interview, derived from the annotations made in the initial readings and interview field notes.

To guard against researcher bias and improve trustworthiness, bracketing (Morrow, 2005) was utilised in the form of a reflexive journal (Davis & Meyer, 2009), which was maintained throughout data collection and analysis. Additionally, internal member checking (Lincoln & Guba, 2005) was conducted during the interviews to check for accuracy, consistency, integrity, and grounding of data without influencing the responses of interviewees. External member checking between the first and second authors was achieved via a joint analysis of the data, repeated questioning and interpretation of the themes and their meanings until a final interpretation was agreed upon.

Results and Discussion

Fifteen adventure sport coaching clients aged between 25 to 56 years old were interviewed. Interview duration ranged from 11 to 25 minutes. Analysis of the transcripts generated 1003 codified units from the transcripts. The main thematic analysis was grouped into 75 lower-order themes, 14 mid-order themes and three higher-order themes: holistic, authentic, and developmental experiences (see Table 3). Below, the higher-order themes are considered in relation to the main focus of this investigation.

Insert Table 3 close to this point

Holistic experience

Three mid-order themes, domestic, social, and package, contribute to the holistic experience and are important considerations for those seeking coaching. Regarding the domestic aspects, 14 interviewees expressed a desire to have high quality arrangements on the course, which had been fulfilled. Kyle said, ‘It’s nice they have good accommodation and food’. Jodi added, ‘The food here is amazing … it’s all part of it’, suggesting that satisfying

domestic aspects were part of the whole experience. Good quality domestic arrangements included time with a community of fellow adventure sport participants. The social interaction was highly valued and viewed as an aspect of the experience. Emma described this as, 'chatting to other people, both on [her] particular course and those engaged on other courses'. The shared bonds between participants generated by their experiences were recognised as significant by Houge Mackenzie and Brymer (2018), Varley and Semple (2015) and Williams and Soutar (2005).

Echoing Emma's comment, Justin further elaborated the social learning aspect by linking this explicitly to his learning:

> I thought it was quite nice to be residential, so you have a bit more of an experience of it, feels like a holiday, a big course, feels like you are learning something, but now I'm here it's even better because you have such a breadth of experience from all the other people … it's magnified it [the learning], made it much better.

Gina offered the insight: 'When you talk about things, you deconstruct things in a different way socially than you do between instructor and student'. This supports Ellmer and Rynne (2016), who reported in a biographical study of a single individual that social learning was a function of adventure sports. A further dimension of the social aspect is immersion in the culture surrounding the activity. Engaging in the coaching process offers entry into the lifestyle associated with each sport. Pierce, for example, derived enjoyment 'from just listening to the stories of the coach'. Extra-curricular activities that coaches may facilitate can influence clients' behaviour, engaging them or inducting them into the lifestyle surrounding the activity. Feeling like a climber or kayaker enhances clients' enjoyment, reflecting the lifestyle aspect of adventure sports. For example, after climbing at Tremadog, it is traditional to go for a cup of tea at the Eric Café, a venue steeped in history. For some participants,

adventure sports could be considered a lifestyle, offering a sub-culture of which to be a part, self-realisation and personal identify, consistent with the definitions by Wheaton (2004) and Ellmer and Rynne (2016). While the differences between adventure sport, nature sport, action sport, and lifestyle sport may be of academic interest, such overlap, as highlighted by the interviewees, is clearly part of the sought-after adventure sport coaching experience.

Encapsulated in the packaged aspect is that of feeling safe whilst being in adventurous environments. Gina commented that: 'You might be putting yourself in a situation that's not acceptable', and Justin said: 'I wouldn't be doing this on my own at this point'. It was widely reported by interviewees that they perceived coaching as the safest option for them to have quality, safe 'outdoor' time. Offering a holistic, facilitated experience, where safety is paramount, links to Pine and Gilmore's (1998) notion of the experience economy and aspects of commodification. Multiple authors (Beames & Varley, 2013; Brown, 2000; Loynes, 1998) warn that some benefits of outdoor education may be lost in the commodification process. However, it would seem that the commodification of some aspects of the coaching experience, in this context, is desirable. For example, where a coach might make the majority of the decisions about a particularly adventurous activity, or having access, as part of the course, to appropriate specialist equipment for an activity. The holistic experience acts as a scaffold and supports the authentic experience.

Authentic experience

A context-specific authenticity is central to the client experience. In this context, authenticity is how real the experience is to the client, echoing the relationship between client and experience, or learner and object, as reported by Bonnett and Cuypers (2002). The interviewees reported that the three dimensions – adventure, challenge, and context – interacted and, when experienced together, created a sense of authenticity. Raymond's

expectation was that the 'holiday' package was combined with his desire for 'real adventure'. Fourteen of the 15 interviewees expressed the importance of authenticity during their coaching, this appears highly individualised. This presents a challenge for coaches, who need to discern what clients find adventurous. The interviewees all reported that they wished to engage in authentic adventure as a participant, rather than as a passenger, who is at the centre of the activity. In this context, participants were able to understand the risks involved in the activity and to have some degree of ownership over the decisions governing their participation. As a passenger, one's experience is devoid of risk. The coach makes the decision, akin to Humberstone's (Humberstone, 2009) illustration and Brown's notion of passengers and partners (2000). The desire to be participants rather than passengers reflects an additional dimension that requires individualisation. Chloe's motivation was, in part, to experience the difficulties associated with adventure as she saw it. Raymond linked the desire for adventure to the learning experience:

> I think if I didn't have the adventure, it would feel like a bit hermetic, a little bit, just theoretical rather than practical and actually the mountains are all about [the] practical side of things. You can do things in the classroom, I could do that anywhere but actually I've come here to climb mountains, yeah, for me the two things [learning and adventure] are intrinsic.

There was an expectation amongst 12 of the interviewees that adventure sport coaching should be both physically and cognitively challenging to be authentic, which, in parts, starts to clarify the nature of authenticity amongst these participants. Natalie echoed Raymond, articulating the nature of that challenge, 'it's important that you are probably challenged, to some degree, physically and intellectually, to learn'. The value placed on learning is implied in this quote. There is an implicit hedonistic aspect, the thrill or rush (Buckley, 2012) of overcoming both the physical and cognitive challenges. Such demands

differentiate challenge from adventure. The challenge of completing a hard-climbing route indoors could be enjoyable, but the desire and reasons for seeking coaching lie in taking that newly realised skill outdoors. Natalie's attention to learning suggested that notions such as comfort zone (Priest & Gass, 2005) and edgework (Lyng & Snow, 1986; Lyng, 1990; Pomfret & Bramwell, 2016) become aspects that demand individualisation. Learning through adventure sports clearly has to be authentic to the individual.

A sentiment common to all interviewees was the importance of context in the learning experience. Alexandre highlighted this, saying, 'Whilst it was the skill that had been coached, it was only when it was applied in the context of mountaineering that it really felt like I knew, felt real, felt like I knew the skill better'. Understanding and experiencing the context for the skill, and the situation for its application, was perceived as important. Establishing conceptual links, associations, honing perceptions and situational awareness contextualised the learning in the experience. The need for context may also reflect the learning of adults in this study as requiring an explicit relevance to the skills being learnt, andragogy (Knowles, 1970) rather than pedagogy. The extent to which this encourages the capacity of participants to learn independently requires further investigation. The nature of the contextual experience depends upon the individual and, in particular, their long-term goals in adventure sports. If coaching is to feel authentic for clients, coaches must first understand clients' participation in adventure sports and shape the learning environment accordingly. As authenticity is clearly personal, it represents an additional coaching aspect to individualise. Coaches must understand each client's concept of adventure, challenge, and context, and understand how the coaching fits with the clients' larger goals in order to effectively align themselves with clients and their experience.

Developmental experience

Development of confidence, technical skills and building capacity for independent performance and learning emerged as key aspects of the developmental experience. All interviewees discussed the importance of developing confidence as a specific aspect of development. Jodi's end goal was 'to become more confident'. Gina sought 'mainly confidence building'. Reflecting on her multiple coaching experiences, Chloe stated that the reason for this course was to 'get my confidence back and to make me enjoy it again'. It was unclear if the earlier coaching experiences had led to the fall in confidence. Chloe further highlighted, 'If you looked at the list of how much coaching I've had you'd think, gosh she'd be really good, and I don't feel that I am'. Confidence is a synergy and an outcome of the developmental experience. Clients seek greater confidence from their coaching but also have more confidence if the coaching experience is successful. In other words, confidence begets confidence.

Alexandre emphasised his confidence as an aspect of his independence: 'The confidence having had a coached experience then doing it on your own, [is] good for confidence'. Martin linked his desire for greater confidence more directly with consolidating technical performance: 'I think the confidence comes from practising'. All interviewees saw the value in practice and feedback with a coach present, this presumably included feedback contributing to their self-efficacy. Four interviewees also used the term 'confidence' to describe the increased self-belief sought through coaching. In particular, their coach was a key source of higher self-belief. Kyle related that '[the coach] showed me what I can achieve'. Tailoring any coaching practice towards developing confidence begins with understanding what the client means by confidence. Given how imprecisely it was described in these interviews, the process of developing athletes' confidence could represent a challenge for coaches.

Six interviewees explicitly identified technical development as a goal of coaching. Marian characterised the nature of the desired skill retention: 'It was about embedding good techniques; the foundations are kinda there for future paddling'. Marian's description reflects the definition of learning advanced by Soderstrom and Bjork (2015), according to which skills are stored in the memory flexibly and adaptively. Gina explained the link between skill usage and context: 'Each time you have to adapt, it's fundamentally the same mental theory underneath but you have to learn to be flexible with it, apply it slightly differently in different situations'. Clearly, this cognitive aspect to the performance in adventure sports is important, perhaps reflecting the desire for independence. Several authors (Carson & Collins, 2016; Christensen, Sutton, & McIlwain, 2016) have proposed models of skill acquisition that include cognitive aspects. This challenges the notions of skilful performance without cognitive effort (see Dreyfus, 2004; Fitts & Posner, 1967) that is used extensively in many NGB coach education programmes.

The desire for independence was one of the main drivers of adaptive and flexible personal skills. According to Martin, 'One of the reasons for doing it [coaching], would be to be more confident, more competent to go and actually do it on my own'. Similarly, Brett said: 'When I leave, it's to prepare me for [independent] adventures'. Both emphasised how coaching fitted within their larger long-term goals. Nine other interviewees cited independence as a motivation to seek coaching. However, like adventure, independence is personal. In the context of this study, the two appeared linked. Some clients performed independently on a coach-led activity, while others sought independence from coaches, post-coaching. Gina explained, 'I think I'd find it stressful doing it without having, effectively a good coach there', but she also wanted to be independent within the activity, citing her desire to be 'confident in finding my footing'. She essentially wanted to delegate critical decision-making to the coach. However, those seeking independence post-coaching recognised

autonomous decision-making as part of their independent performance. Raymond highlighted the potential impact of being coached on decision-making: ‘Good coaching will set you up for decision-making long into the future’.

Closely linked to decision-making abilities is the clients’ capacity to learn from experiences. If coaches are to be successful in teaching independence, they must understand the degree to which clients want to be independent. Coaches must understand that clients can be independent on coach-led activities, i.e. choosing their own route or footing. Contrastingly, clients may want coaches to make decisions for a more adventurous experience, sacrificing their independence for a specific experience or goal. At other times they may want more control over the activity in preparation for their long-term development. This difference in potential desires for independence emphasises coaches’ professional judgement and decision-making to individualise the degree of independence sought at any particular time in the coaching, and a sophisticated epistemology that is able to match clients’ desires.

Pierce’s comments reflected the value the interviewees placed on learning. ‘I think if I stop learning I’ll just give up on life; always keep learning, it’s probably the greatest gift we can have’. In addition, Emma recognised the need for robust, well-practised personal skills that she could adapt to the range of environments she might encounter: ‘I can learn those things here but I’m going to have to go away and practise them’. For Emma’s practice to be effective, she needed to be able to make sense of the movement and the environment. Such learning ability allows the clients to make sense of novel experiences, to inform their future participation, independently of a coach. Clearly, individualising to facilitate client learning is common to all coaching; significant to the adventure sport coach, however, is the ability to prepare the client to learn on their own, post-coaching, linking the adventure sport coach’s role to that of educators.

The coaching role must cater for several, sometimes opposing demands. Clients want, in part, to be taken to the edge, having their authentic experience with their coach, but also want long-term learning that they can adapt independently to the hyper-dynamic environment. Pierce exemplified this by having a desire to be '… taken into space beyond what you are capable yourself', but also did not 'want to rely on them [coaches], I want to feel confident in my own skills and ability'. Understanding the client's motivation for coaching and their long-term goals in adventure sports is clearly a precursor to balancing the demands placed on coaches. In addition, the relationship between long-term participation in adventure and reason to seek coaching gives coaches some insight into what clients might deem a successful performance in adventure sports. Essentially, coaches must understand how their coaching fits with clients' longer-term plans, contextualising the reason for the coaching. Furthermore, if that coaching is to be well received it should be individualised. This study has found four aspects of adventure sport coaching to be individualised: challenge, adventure, context, and independence. Critically, the authentic nature of the experience requires coaches to have a deep understanding of the environment, the activity and the individual.

Limitations of the study and future research

This research was conducted at a single centre in the UK and, therefore, aspects of the finding may be specific to that location. Further, a small representative sample was used. However, the research methodology achieves a high 'information power' (Malterud, Siersma & Guassora, 2016) and therefore a lower sample size is appropriate. A broader, larger scale study may nevertheless enable different philosophical positions to be explored, particularly across different cultures. Specifically, regarding the developmental experience, the next logical question is to consider how coaches achieve these desires. Understanding what these

strategies are, why they are used, and when they are used, could inform coach education in adventure sports.

Conclusion

The findings of this study suggest that clients seek adventure sport coaching for three different types of experience: holistic, authentic, and developmental, which are not mutually exclusive and are synergetic. Considering adventure sport coaching in this way further adds to the notion that coaching in this realm has more in common with education than with elite performance development. The adventure sport coaching experience has aspects in common with lifestyle sports, performance coaching and education, creating a complex set of circumstances for coaches to navigate if they are to be successful from the clients' perspective. Coaches are integral in aligning the activities on the coaching course with each client's expectations, which forms their personalised coaching experience. This, in part, explains why those interviewed could not separate the coach from the coaching. Additionally, individualisation appears to have greater breadth than originally conceived and places pressure on coaches to be adaptable, flexible, and innovative (Bowes & Jones, 2006; Nash & Collins, 2006; Tozer, Fazey, & Fazey, 2007), transcending mere in-session pedagogy. A good adventure sport coach will need to adapt their practice to fulfil the needs and motivation of the client, and then have the flexibility to meet the client expectations of an authentic and developmental experience. These requirements for adaptability point towards the need to understand how coaches themselves can be developed to respond to the synergy of environmental and client demands. This coaching environment emphasises skilled, professional coaches with a sophisticated epistemological position and the tools to meet client expectation; this seems particularly challenging in adventure sports, where personal constructs of adventure are present throughout. These constructs affect the client's motivation for seeking coaching and therefore the level of performance desired. Clients may be looking

for a short-term adventurous experience in the context of their long-term learning for independence and also wanting a commodified experience that facilitates participation post-coaching. The demands on the adventure sport coach are complex, contextual, and, at times, conflicting.

Disclosure statement

No potential conflict of interest is reported.

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Table 1

Summarising the demography of the participants of this study.

Participant	Gender	Age	Predominant activity, course
Natalie	F	53	Mountain, Intro to scrambling
Brett	M	42	Mountain, Lead climber
Emma	F	43	Mountain, Intro to scrambling
Marian	F	56	Water, Whitewater kayak improvers
Kyle	M	30	Mountain, Lead climber
Pierce	M	45	Mountains, Intro to winter mountaineer / Mountain biking
Martin	M	51	Mountain, Winter mountaineer
Raymond	M	55	Mountain, Winter mountaineer
Gina	F	48	Water, advanced whitewater kayaker
Jodi	F	39	Mountain, Winter hill walker
Justin	M	35	Mountain, Winter hill walker
Conner	M	27	Mountain, Lead climber
Simon	M	46	Water, Intermediate whitewater
Chloe	F	53	Water, Intermediate whitewater
Alexandre	M	25	Mountain, Winter climber skills

Table 2

Semi-structured interview questions.

Opening Question	Secondary Question	Probes
Administration		
Have you read and understood the information sheet?	Signed consent Do you have any questions at this stage? Remind interviewee that they are free to withdraw at any time without explanation.	Ensure ethical considerations are met Undefined: Coaching Independent adventure
Recent		
Can you tell me about your most recent coaching session(s)?	What did you get up to? What did you take from that coaching? How do you feel as a result?	Inspiration Social group Location New independent adventures Enjoyment
Why did you seek out coaching?	What did you want to achieve? What influenced you to seek out coaching at this point? Did you have any way of measuring your improvement/ learning? Have you used the feedback you were given during this coaching? What can you/have you done as a result of the coaching?	TTPP Confidence Experience Specific challenges Social groups
Do you intend to seek out coaching again in the future and why?	If not, (building on previous questions) do you plan to keep participating in the sport? i.e. without coaching are you doing what you want in your sport?	Independence Coach-led experience

	If yes, what will be your reason for this? What do you think your goals will be?	Technical skills Confidence More experience NGB courses
What is your perception of good coaching?	What do you expect from the overall experience? How did the coach meet your expectations? How important is having a real adventure during coaching? What are your expectations with long-term learning?	Quantity of resources Locations Warmth of welcome Friendship Coaching expertise Teaching skill Technical skill

Table 3

Thematic analysis

Higher-Order Themes (3)	**Mid-Order Themes (10)**	**Lower-Order Themes (56)**
Holistic experience	Domestic	Fundamental needs
		Good food
		Reputation
		Comfort
	Social	Like-minded people
		Socialising
		Peer support
	Packaged	Enjoyment
		Culture surrounding activity/coaching
		It's a holiday
		Opportunistic
		No specific learning outcomes
		Safest option for participation
		Experience limited to coached experiences
Authentic experience	Adventurous	Real adventure
		Adventure provides growth
	Challenging	Want to be pushed
		Sense of achievement
	Contextual	Learning in context
		Controlled environment
		Specific to a future goal
Developmental experience	Confidence	Self-efficacy
		Self-belief
		Overcoming anxiety
		Progressive
		Affirmation
		Ownership
		Coach is a source of confidence

Technical development	Adaptive skills
	Mastery
	Control and comfort in actions
	Improvement post-course
	Step/jump in improvement
	Faster rate of progression post-course
	Fundamentals
	Simpler
	To correct bad habits
	Technical development
	Competency
	Training for emergency
Independence	Seeking independence
	Independence is necessary
	Independent post-course
	Decision-making
	At times not independent during the course
Learning capacity	Continuously learning
	Consolidation
	Value of practice
	More experience needed
	Framing
	Feedback
	Social learning
	Declarative knowledge
	Learning from the coach's experience
	Takes notes
	Top tips and handy hints